

issue plain: 1st. I charge Mr. Slattery with being an unfrocked priest, and that his faculties were withdrawn from him for intemperance. 2nd. I assert that the woman known as the Escaped Nun was never a nun in St. Joseph Convent, Poor Clares, in Cavan, Ireland, in the year 1883 or a few years after, as stated by her.' Mr. Winter called upon Slattery to proceed against him for libel and offered to 'prove the charges contained in the pamphlet up to the hilt.' 'As an inducement,' he continues, 'to Mr. Slattery, I will deposit £100 with some responsible person, say the Mayor of Melbourne, provided Mr. Slattery deposits a similar amount; if Mr. Slattery obtains a verdict, my deposit would go to him; and if I obtain a verdict, his £100 be given, not to me, but to the Melbourne Hospital. I will place a second £100 against a like amount from him, if he can prove in a law court that his companion, whom he calls the Escaped Nun, was ever a nun in St. Joseph's Convent of Poor Clares, Cavan, Ireland, in the year stated by her. Should he fail to prove this, his £100 be given to St. Vincent's Hospital. This is a challenge which any honest man ought to accept.' But Slattery did not accept it. On the contrary, he publicly declined to do so. The public can judge the reason why. We may state that the challenge is open still, should the doughty ex-priest take heart of grace to meet it.

His 'Conversion.'

The letters of Cardinal MacCabe and Archbishop Walsh sufficiently explain the 'conversion' of Joseph Slattery. He did not, as stated in his book (p. 60) and in his lectures, leave the ministry of the Catholic Church of his own accord. He was driven out of it. There are broken down clergy in every denomination. So long as human nature is frail, and so long as there are some who enter the priesthood not called, as Aaron was—not by the door, but over the wall—so long will it be necessary to inflict the censures of the Church upon priests here and there who fall far below the high standard of their holy calling. It is one of the highest testimonials to the Catholic Church that she casts out from her ministry men like McNamara and Slattery, and prevents fellows of the type of the bogus 'ex-priests' Riordan (*alias* Ruthven) and Nobbs (*alias* Widows) from ever attaining to the priesthood. As for Slattery, his 'conversion' was determined by the fact of his dismissal from the ranks of the Irish Catholic clergy. His own account of his 'conversion' is self-contradictory, does not hang together, and is not worth a moment's consideration in the face of the evidence referred to above. Thus, in a lecture of his published by the *Christian Scotsman* of July 3, 1897,* he gives an elaborate account of his difficulties, tells how he submitted them to his brother priests, then to his bishop, and finally to a conference of thirty or forty priests. In his lecture at the Baptist Church, Brunswick, Melbourne,† he omits all reference to the bishop, and reduces the conference of priests from forty to thirteen! In his *Secrets of Romish Priests* (p. 60) he represents himself as having, while yet ministering in the Catholic Church, 'lost faith in what [he] was doing.' But he kept on 'doing' it all the same, until, 'after mature thought and deliberation, [he] gave up Rome.' We are in a way glad that the two arch-bishops' letters save us the mortification of believing that any priest would be guilty of exercising the awful mysteries of a religion in which he had 'lost faith.' He then proceeds to tell us that after he had 'stepped out from Rome' he was 'on the verge of infidelity.' Then, according to one account, he was converted through having a very familiar text of the Bible explained to him by one who is vaguely referred to as 'a Captain Johnston, of the British army.' In his mendacious book or pamphlet (p. 61) the gallant warrior who does the expounding of the Scriptures appears under an *alias*—after the manner of 'ex-priests' Nobbs and Riordan and 'Father Leo'—and is (again somewhat vaguely) referred to as 'Captain Thompson, of Dublin.' A plausible fibster needs a good memory, a constructive faculty, a sense of proportion, and a nice perception of probabilities. Slattery is manifestly deficient in all of these. As a result, even a superficially critical examination of his pamphlets would condemn them, on internal evidence alone, as wholly untrustworthy and misleading.

Tales for the Marines.

Slattery's insane tales of Catholic depravity are manifestly not intended for educated people who read and think. His appeal is made exclusively for that gullible portion of the community that is attracted by garish monstrosities and blood-curdling horrors, behind which there lies the hope or promise of prurient 'revelations.' Such people lack the critical faculty. They have an insatiable hunger and thirst for the monstrous, the gory, and the impossible. Like the Queen in *Through the Looking Glass*, by assiduous practice they become at last capable of believing as many as six impossible things before breakfast. For another class the prurient would apart from its truth or falsehood, be manifestly the chief attraction. Mr. Labouchere, a non-Catholic and editor of *Truth*, hits off as follows the drift of the Slattery combination. 'It must be perfectly obvious to anyone with the slightest knowledge of the world that these lectures are delivered simply for the purpose of putting money into the lecturer's pocket, and that to gain his end the lecturer is appealing to prurency and indecency under the guise of religion.' Mr. Adams, Chairman of the Board of Stewards of one of the Methodist churches of Savannah, wrote a letter dated March 9, 1895, to the *Nashville Advocate*, the official organ of the Methodist Church South (U.S.A.), denouncing Slattery's lectures and handbills. He says: 'I do not hesitate to say that I cannot understand how a Christian or a gentleman, or a decent man, could have been, as Slattery was, the author of these handbills. Catholics were naturally and properly very much exasperated, and it seems to me that all fair-minded people ought to have been indignant.' The *Church Times*, an Anglican organ, in a recent article, deplores

the outbreak of fanatical feeling, and says that it is 'directly responsible for calling out a flood of obscene literature, letters, and postcards, which of themselves would disgrace any cause.' The well-known charges of *Truth* (it continues) have never been answered, and, therefore, judgment must go by default, but also it should be recollected that the offence is still being committed. The subject of the confessional has given occasion to a number of prurient-minded people to evolve imaginary charges out of their own dirty minds. When they have ventured on a specific charge, they have been met at once and their falsehoods exposed. But still they go on stamping the country and bringing general charges, apparently because they are too cowardly to bring specific ones and too prurient to abstain altogether. It is useless to tell them that confession is used as a means of grace with much prayer for strength and guidance, for we enter here into an atmosphere to which they are strangers. We can only conclude that they say what they do, knowing what they themselves would be likely to do were they confessors.'

Slattery in Gaol.

Slattery has contributed one vile sample to this 'flood of obscene literature.' The specimen before us was published and sold by him in America. This led to his imprisonment for selling indecent literature. When this was made known in Great Britain, Slattery, in his *Complete Refutation* (p. 4), and in the *Christian Scotsman* (a paper of Orange tendency), and elsewhere, indignantly denied having been imprisoned for this offence. Dean Lynch promptly cabled as follows to the Bishop of Pittsburgh:—

'Bishop, 519 Grant street, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.

'Was Slattery, lecturing apostate priest, imprisoned for selling indecent literature?—LYNCH, Roman Catholic Presbytery, St. Wilfrid's, Manchester.'

He received the following reply:—

'Lynch, Roman Catholic Presbytery, St. Wilfrid's, Manchester, England.

'Yes.—BISHOP, Pittsburg.'

Will it be believed? Within two months after his denial (says the *Herald*, Edinburgh) he was selling the self-same book in Manchester, Glasgow, and Edinburgh, until the police stopped him in the last-mentioned place, and on the fly-leaf of the book he declared: 'This is the book for selling which I was imprisoned in America!' And in his lectures in Australia, as reported in the *Victorian Standard*, he not alone admits the truth of what he had previously denied, but apparently glories in the fact that he was imprisoned for the sale of an indecent pamphlet! In a lecture at the Temperance Hall, Melbourne, June 14, 1899, he paid the following indignant tribute to the respectability of the printers and publishers of that city: 'Rome is hanging over the people with a threatening cloud. For instance, Sands and McDougall would not print my book. Robertson would not handle any of my books. Gordon and Gotch tried it, but ran out of the field quickly. What are you coming to? † Persons who debase the minds of youth by the indiscriminate circulation of lewd or prurient ribaldry deserve the vigorous words used by Carlyle when he described Swinburne and his school as 'persons immersed in the filth of a cesspool, eagerly endeavouring to add to its foulness by their personal contributions.' Zolaism will not die out so long as the typical 'ex-priest' and 'ex-nun' survive.

[For a further exposure of the careers of Slattery and his wife see next week's issue. Orders for extra copies should reach this office as early as possible on Monday morning.]

PERSONAL NEATNESS.

TIDINESS is a woman's first law. It is in many an inherent virtue, but let those who have to acquire do it without delay, for a slovenly woman is an unlovely sight. It is to be regretted that many women are careless of their appearance when at home. They seem to think no social law exists that requires them to make themselves as neat, if not pretty, when 'the family' is present as when among their friends; but here they err greatly. Who will want to see them at their best if not those dear to them?

T O - M O R R O W.

TO-MORROW! How often do we say that, when a resolution is taken or a purpose designed, and how mockingly fate laughs back at us. To-morrow! As if time was in our poor, mortal hands, or as if, to the cowardly and procrastinating, there ever is a tomorrow! As if that word alone has not been the bane of more good intentions and the death-knell of more noble actions, as if it does not stand for more harm and ill and suffering than any other common to the lips of man! He who is always going to do, but never does, moves in a very small circle. He will remain where he begins, because there is no lower plane to which he can retrograde. Futile promises of starting to-morrow lead to nowhere. To-morrow never comes.

* About the middle of 1897 a notorious clergyman sent to the Queen a copy of his vile book, *Jacob Pinner in Rome*. Her Majesty's secretary thereupon sent him the following 'acknowledgment,' which is said to have been written under instructions: 'I regret to inform you that I am unable to lay this work before Her Majesty and consequently must beg you to allow me to return it.' Queen Victoria evidently shares every decent woman's contempt for such crusades as that of Slattery and his bogus 'ex-nun.'

† Verbatim report in *Victorian Standard*, June 30, 1899, p. 10.

* Reprinted from the *Boston Citizen*.

† Reported verbatim in the *Victorian Standard* of May 31, 1899.